ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

GRIDLINK AND CLIMATE CHANGE

The GridLink interconnector project will offer a significant benefit to the achievement of climate change objectives of the UK and European Union.

By improving the transmission network available to renewable energy, it will enable surplus renewable energy that currently cannot be exploited to be imported/exported and also provide security of supply from other energy sources if renewable energy is lower than expected. This will encourage the full use of renewable resources to displace fossil fuels and reduce carbon emissions as a result.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

GridLink Interconnector Ltd is committed to high standards of environmental management for the lifetime of the project.

Like all interconnector projects, GridLink involves the construction of converter stations and installation of submarine and underground cables, which inevitably have the potential to cause environmental impacts.

However, the potential environmental effects can be avoided or minimised by the appropriate design of the project and its implementation, including converter station site selection, cable route selection, choice of technology, building design, construction techniques and operating systems.

Detailed environmental studies have assessed the potential impacts and risks to the environment from the project, which fall into six main categories:

- Disruption to shipping, navigation and fishing;
- Disturbance of protected ecological sites, marine organisms (fish, whales and dolphins, etc), archaeological sites or wrecks by cable installation vessels, underwater noise, sediment in the water column and/or lighting;
- Changes to seabed conditions after the submarine cable is installed, resulting in changes to sedimentation, seabed scour and snagging hazards for anchors and fishing gear;
- Temporary disturbance of local residents and ecological impacts from construction activities, vehicles and workers, including construction traffic, noise and lighting;
- Visual and landscape impact from converter station buildings;
- Operational noise from the converter station.

The key environmental sensitivities near to the converter station site and submarine cable route are the protected environmental sites comprising the inter-tidal mudflats along the Medway Estuary, anchorages and shipping lanes, and fishing grounds for shellfish (cockles, oysters) and fish.

Environmental studies and assessments of these and other environmental impacts have been carried out by independent environmental consultants on behalf of GridLink. The environmental reports will be included as part of the planning application and marine licence application.

Extensive surveys and consultations with navigation authorities, fishermen associations, other marine users and environmental organisations have been carried out to inform the environmental assessments and make sure that local issues and sensitivities are properly considered.

By taking this information into account and incorporating mitigation measures into the GridLink project, we are confident that the new interconnector will be compatible with its surroundings and co-exist with existing marine users without any significant environmental impacts.

Drop Down Video Survey of the Seabed